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**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1.(Currently Amended)      A method of ~~timing an attempt~~ attempting to establish a connection path between ~~[[a]]~~ first and second ~~node~~ nodes in a communications network, said method comprising ~~initiating said attempt to establish a connection path~~ attempting to establish said connection after a period of time has elapsed which is based on a previous interval of delay between two previous attempts, wherein said period of time is greater than ~~another period of time which had previously elapsed between two previous attempts, if any, to establish said connection~~ said previous interval of delay.

Claim 2. (Original)      The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said period of time is greater than said another period of time by a fixed time value.

Claim 3. (Original)      The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said period of time does not exceed a maximum time value.

Claim 4. (Original)      The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said connection path is a soft permanent label switched path.

Claim 5. (Original)      The method as claimed in claim 2 wherein said fixed time value is ten seconds.

Claim 6. (Original)      A method of timing attempts to establish connections for a plurality of requests for connections in a communication network, said method comprising:  
                                 having a timer arrangement tracking passage of a regular interval of time;  
                                 having a list of records relating said plurality of requests for connections; selecting one record from said list;

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attempting to establish a connection relating to said one record; and if said connection relating to said one record is established, then marking said one record as being successful, otherwise, re-attempting to establish said connection at successive intervals increasing by said regular interval.

Claim 7. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 6 wherein said selecting one record from said list comprises:

having a time field in said list of records;  
on each said regular interval of time for each entry in said list of records: decrementing a time value in said time field; and  
if said time value is zero for an entry is zero, then selecting said entry as said one record.

Claim 8. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 6, wherein when re-attempting to establish said connection at successive time intervals, said successive time intervals do not exceed a maximum time value.

Claim 9. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 8 wherein said maximum time value is sixty seconds.

Claim 10. (Cancelled)

Claim 11. (Cancelled)

Claim 12. (New) A method of establishing a label switched path (LSP) over an MPLS routing domain established within an IP over ATM network, comprising the steps of:

- (a) receiving a LSP setup request for connecting an ingress node in said MPLS routing domain with an egress node;
- (b) defining a unique LSP ID for said LSP and establishing a signaling link between said ingress and egress node, by creating a label distribution protocol (LDP) session at said ingress node, egress node and each hop along said LSP;

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- (c) associating all said LDP sessions to said LSP; and
- (d) establishing said LSP for transmitting traffic along said LSP between said ingress and egress node by providing at said ingress node a retry timer based on a back off mechanism for enabling successive attempts to establish said LSP at increasing retry intervals.

Claim 13. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein said retry timer provides an initial retry interval of T seconds, and each next successive retry interval is longer than a previous period of time by T seconds.

Claim 14. (New) The method as claimed in claim 13 wherein the sum of the increasing retry intervals does not exceed a maximum time value.

Claim 15. (New) The method as claimed in claim 13 wherein said LSP is a signaling LSP.

Claim 16. (New) The method as claimed in claim 13 wherein T is 10 seconds.

Claim 17. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein said retry timer tracks an interval of time, and said step (d) further comprises:

selecting one record from a list of records relating to a plurality of requests for connections;

attempting to establish a connection relating to said one record, said connection being associated with said LSP; and

if said connection relating to said one record is established, then marking said one record as being successfully connected, otherwise, re-attempting to establish said connection at said increasing retry intervals, each of said successive increasing retry interval being greater than a last retry interval by said regular interval of time.

Claim 18. (New) The method as claimed in claim 17, wherein:

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each record of said list of records includes a respective time field; and  
said selecting one record from said list comprises, at each said increasing retry interval  
and for said each record in said list of records:  
decrementing a time value stored in said each respective time field; and  
if the time value for any said each respective time field is zero, then selecting the  
record associated with the any said each respective time field as said one  
record.

Claim 19. (New) The method as claimed in claim 17, wherein said re-attempting to  
establish said connection occurs only if the sum of the increasing retry intervals does not exceed  
a maximum time value.

Claim 20 (New) The method as claimed in claim 19 wherein said maximum time value is  
sixty seconds.

Claim 21 (New) The method of claim 12, wherein said step (b) comprises: establishing at  
least another signaling link between said ingress and egress node, and selecting one of said  
signaling link and said another signaling link utilizing a round robin algorithm.

Claim 22. (New) The method of claim 21, further comprising not selecting any of said  
signaling links whenever said network does not have sufficient resources for establishing one of  
said signaling links.

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